

# Lucio Bill Aims at Supporting Produce Imports

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**Austin, TX – Senator Eddie Lucio** (D-Brownsville), was applauded for his legislation that improves importation of produce into Texas.

## **Texas Protects Produce With New Border Bill\***

TEXAS - The latest legislation in Texas will hopefully speed up the rate of produce import entries into the United States. With the passage of Texas House Bill 2155—which will go into effect September 1, 2019—the inspection process of trucks carrying fresh produce across ports-of-entry along the Texas-Mexico border should improve.

Dante Galeazzi, President and CEO of the Texas International Produce Association (TIPA), shared his thoughts regarding the bill with ANUK.

“TIPA is very pleased with the passage of House Bill 2155, the South Texas Assets Consortium Agriculture Grant Program—or STAC Ag for short. The growth of fresh produce traveling through our region has grown exponentially over the years, and this program not only **provides a tool for federal resources** to keep up with that growth, but it also allows industry and private enterprises to provide financial support as well in a cost match program,” Dante stated. “The support and action of our local elected officials, like Representative Guerra and Senator Lucio shows their **commitment to keeping fresh produce moving quickly** and efficiently across our Texas ports-of-entry. Without programs like this, the regions infrastructure would have trouble keeping up with the growth we’ve had...and the growth we expect to continue in the years to come.”

The bill itself, according to [local news source Freight Waves](#), reauthorizes a 2015 program which allowed the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to allocate grant money to select organizations. These grants, which would equal \$750,000 over the span of two years, would be used to **pay for hiring new U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers**, as well as the overtime of current CBP officers.

“It is important that we **efficiently and safely move perishable goods** through our ports of entry to keep the cost of produce low for Texans while boosting the economy by **encouraging trade with Mexico**,” stated State Representative Bobby Guerra, (D-McAllen), who authored and helped pass the bill.

Tommy Wilkins, Director of Sales with Grow Farms, also shared his support of the bill.

“It is a revamp of rules geared to speed up any inspection that requires offloading of produce. We are **fighting to maintain the integrity of the cold chain**. This, I believe, recognizes how important crossings are to the Texas economy and we must take care of the perishable produce headed to the consumers. This is good business and wonderful support from the Governor,” Wilkins stated.

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\* Allen, Anne. "Texas Protects Produce With New Border Bill." *And Now U Know*, 12 July 2019, <https://www.andnowuknow.com/headlines/texas-protects-produce-new-border-bill-Dante-Galeazzi-Bobby-Guerra-Tommy-Wilkins/anne-allen/63880>